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| <b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES<br/>FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION</b> | <b>FOOD SUPPLEMENT<br/>PROGRAM MANUAL</b> |        |
| FILING AN APPLICATION   | Section 400                               | Page 1 |

## **400.1 Purpose**

This section provides the policies on obtaining and filing an application.

## **400.2 General Policy**

- A. The application process begins with a request for an application, and ends with determination and notification of the household's eligibility or ineligibility.
- B. Unless expedited, households must be given an opportunity to participate, if eligible, no later than 30 days from the date an application is filed.
- C. Provide households determined eligible Food Supplement Program (FSP) benefits retroactive to the day of application. An application must be filed in order to establish and protect the right to retroactive FSP benefits. This is one of the reasons it is important to encourage households to file an application on the same day they contact the FSP office.
- D. An interview is not required before a household files the application.
- E. Households may file an incomplete application as long as it contains the applicant's name and address, and is signed by a responsible adult member of the household or an authorized representative.
- F. The case manager must not have close association or kinship with any household member of the case.
  1. Where there is a close association or kinship the staff person must disqualify himself or herself from the eligibility process.
  2. When this occurs, the local department must reassign the case to an impartial DSS staff member.
  3. The assigned case manager or supervisor may not seek information from or discuss the case with the disqualified staff person.
- G. The case manager must offer each person, age 16 and above the opportunity to register to vote.

## **400.3 Filing an Application**

- A. The application forms are as follows:
  1. The myDHR electronic application;

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2. The CARES generated Eligibility Determination Document (EDD);
  3. The DHR/FIA 9711 Request for Assistance Form;
  4. The DHR/FIA 9701(Eligibility Determination Document);
  5. The DHR/FIA 9702 (Eligibility Determination Document for a One-Person Household); or
  6. Application forms designed by the local department and approved by the Family Investment Administration.
- B. Households may file FSP applications by submitting the appropriate form to the FSP office in person, through an authorized representative, electronically, by mail, by fax or by another electronic method.
- C. Residents of drug addict/alcohol treatment centers and group homes may apply only through a representative who is an employee of the center.
- D. Residents of other group living arrangements may apply and be certified on their own behalf through the use of an authorized representative of their own choosing or by a representative employed and designated by the group living arrangement. The group living arrangement and the applicant's mental and physical ability to handle his or her own affairs can determine which method is used.
- G. An Individual receiving FSP benefits who is convicted after July 1, 2000 of a drug related felony involving the manufacture, distribution, or possession with the intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance is:
1. Ineligible for FSP for one year from the date of conviction, and
  2. To receive FSP after that year, the applicant must meet all other eligibility requirements and is subject to testing and treatment for substance abuse for a period of two years starting from the later of the date when the custodial parent:
    - (a) Is released from incarceration,
    - (b) Completes any term of probation,
    - (c) Completes any term of parole and mandatory supervision.
- E. Households have the right to file an application on the same day they contact the FSP office.

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### **400.3 Filing an Application (continued)**

- F. Local departments will encourage households to file an application the same day the household or its representative contacts the FSP office electronically, in person or by telephone.
- G. Application forms must be readily accessible to potentially eligible households and to groups or organizations involved in outreach efforts.
- H. The local department will give an application to anyone requesting one immediately or give the potential applicant a seat in the myDHR lab as soon as one is available and help them apply the same day.

### **400.4 Initial Contact with Potentially Eligible Households**

Advise the household of its filing rights (see Section 400.3). Give the household other information as needed or requested.

#### **400.41 In-Person Contact**

- A. Encourage the household to file an application on the date of initial contact.
- B. Make sure that the application is “completed and signed” - contains at least the applicant’s name, address and contains the signature (written or electronic) of an adult household member or authorized representative.

#### **400.42 Telephone Contact**

- A. Advise the household of its filing rights. Give other information as needed or requested.
- B. Encourage the household to go on myDHR or come to the office to file an application the same day.
- C. Mail an application to households who request one.

#### **400.43 Mail Contact**

- A. If the household’s request is for FSP assistance, mail the application form (and other available appropriate information such as pamphlets, informational literature, etc.) to the household on the same day.

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- B. Ensure that applications returned to the local department are “completed and signed.”

#### **400.44 Filing an Electronic Application**

- A. In addition to filing an application by submitting the forms in person, through an authorized representative or the mail, the household can file a FSP application by faxing or other electronic device a signed application to the local department.
  - 1. For a myDHR application the date of filing is the date the local department receives the electronic signature or the signature page if the applicant prefers not to sign electronically.
  - 2. Local departments must hold the downloaded myDHR application for 60 days while waiting for the customer to mail, fax or hand deliver the signature page, if the applicant has not signed electronically. The local department can destroy the myDHR application after 60 days if the signature page is not received and there is no electronic signature.
- B. The local department must document the date the application was filed by stamping or noting on the application the date of receipt in the local office.
- C. Contact the household (by phone or mail), about additional information (if required) and other available appropriate information such as pamphlets, informational literature, etc., on the same day the application is received.
- D. Contact the household by phone or mail to schedule an in-office interview or conduct a telephone interview, if required.
- E. Ensure that expedited processing standards are met for any household potentially eligible for expedited processing.

#### **400.5 Applicant Contacts the Wrong Office**

- A. If the household has contacted the wrong district or county office, (the household is not living in that district or county), inform the household of the appropriate office location. Help the applicant file through myDHR or by faxing or scanning and emailing their application to the correct office.
- B. The local department will provide the household with an application unless the household is living in another state.
- C. The local department will provide any additional information as needed or requested. For example:

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#### **400.5 Applicant Contacts the Wrong Office (continued)**

1. Advise the household of its filing rights.
2. Give other information as needed or requested.
3. Encourage the household to apply online at myDHR or contact the appropriate office – give the household the address and telephone number of that office.
4. Offer to forward the “completed and signed” application form to the appropriate office the same day it is submitted. Forward the application the same day by any means that ensures the application arrives at the correct office the day it is forwarded (i.e. fax or email).
5. Send the application to the appropriate office on the same day if the household has mailed its application to the wrong office within a project area. The application can be forwarded by any means that ensures the application arrives at the correct office the day it is forwarded (i.e. fax or scan the application into ECMS and email it the correct local department ).

#### **400.6 Providing a Copy of the Application to the Household**

The local department must provide the household with:

- A. The opportunity to review the Eligibility Determination Document (EDD) when the household applies for FSP benefits at the local department and has a face to face interview;
- B. A copy of the EDD for their personal records.

#### **400.7 Withdrawing an Application**

The withdrawal of a FSP application must be a voluntary action by the customer.

- A. Customers have the right to have their applications reviewed and eligibility determined based on all factors of eligibility.
- B. Case managers **must not** make an informal decision on the FSP application by suggesting customers withdraw their applications, even if the customer appears to be ineligible, because it:

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1. Is an eligibility decision made outside the scope of monitoring and record keeping, and
2. Impinges on the customer's rights to have their eligibility reviewed.

C. Case managers must:

1. Encourage customers to file an application for FSP even if they are discouraged from filing a cash assistance application.
2. Encourage customers to file an application at first contact with the local department.
3. Remember the decision to withdraw an application must be the customer's decision for the customer's own reasons.
4. Document in the case record narration why the customer withdrew the application and that contact was made with the household to confirm the withdrawal.
5. Advise customers of the right to reapply at any time after a withdrawal.